



NiCHOLS AND DiMES

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DMDL | MASTER OF ARTS
DIGITAL MEDIA
DESIGN FOR
LEARNING
Design the media and technology of the future.

 **NYU** | **STEINHARDT**



Nichols and Dimes is a half-hour animated series that follows the adventures of Nevada Nichols and Dakota Dimes, a pair of teenage Time Agents, as they attempt to capture Enigma Georgia, a time-travelling master thief.

Each episode sees Nichols and Dimes travel to a specific time period in a different country's history to put a stop to one of Enigma's master plans, which often involves retrieving and returning something she's stolen—usually something of historical value. On occasion, Enigma may intentionally upset the historical timeline, leaving Nichols and Dakota to fix it, thus illustrating the effect certain events have on history.

The show is specifically designed to showcase the history of historically oppressed minority groups—namely women, people of colour, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQIA community—which is rarely touched upon in history classes and textbooks, while also facilitating a deeper understanding of different countries' histories and cultures. The project consists of a television show, as well as a potential game and comic series.

"Diversity in the modern world is more than just skin colour – it's gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, social background, and most important of all... Diversity of thought."

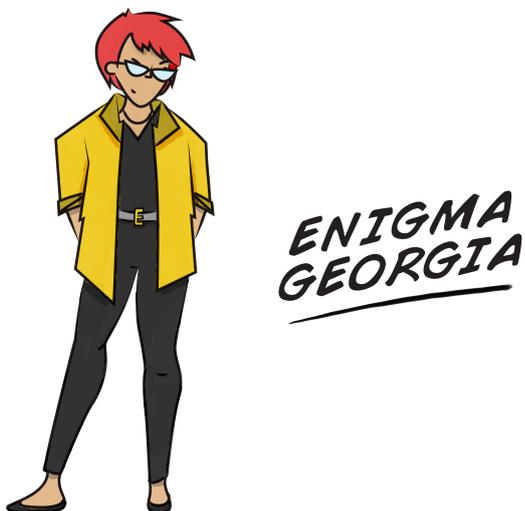
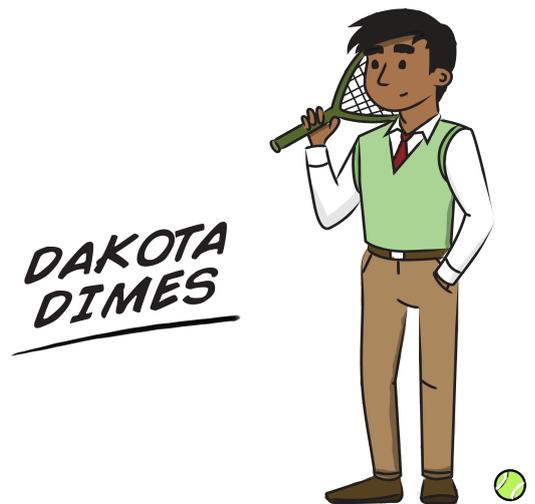
- Idris Elba

Characters



A 14-year-old Indian girl, Nevada is one of the Time Agency's best agents. Smart, and inquisitive she's always up for adventure—think Indiana Jones meets Lois Lane. While she doesn't care about following school rules (or her uniform), she is serious about catching Enigma Georgia and stopping her from messing with the timeline. Her primary drive for the series is to bring Enigma to justice. At times this can make her a little stubborn and single-minded. She's usually considered the "muscle" in her Time Agency partnerships, as she's quite strong and athletic. When she isn't on the job or at school, Nevada can be found at home playing video games or writing *Their Magical Artifices* fan fiction online.

A 13-year-old Puerto Rican boy, Dakota is one of the latest graduates of the Time Academy and is Nevada's new partner. He's new to time travelling, but is excited about it and thinks of it as a learning opportunity. He's pretty upbeat, but gets nervous or a little unsure of himself. He loves learning and solving puzzles. (His grades are also better than Nevada's.) While he cares about catching and stopping Enigma, he isn't as invested in it as Nevada is—he considers it just a job. When he's not in class or time travelling, he can be found playing tennis on one of his family's many courts or reading *Their Magical Artifices* of which he is also a big fan. He is gay.



A 14-year-old girl from Savannah, Georgia, Enigma is a science-genius-turned-time-travelling-master-thief—think *Doctor Who's* River Song meets Carmen Sandiego. While Enigma is often stealing things from different time periods for her own personal gain, she's also proving a point to the Time Agency and trying to avenge her grandfather's legacy as a scientist (though she won't tell Nevada and Dakota this). So while she does enjoy time travelling, she does have a larger mission. Enigma is smart enough to remain hidden from the Time Agency while also building her own time machines as well as an array of gadgets and devices—including robot henchmen.

Pilot Plot

Nevada and Dakota are informed by their boss, Washington Sparks, that Enigma has travelled back to 1465 B.C. Egypt and kidnapped Hatshepsut's—who was pharaoh at the time—cat. The pair travels back in time to the pharaoh's palace in Egypt, but Nevada isn't happy at Dakota having been assigned as her new partner. Once there, they find the clue Enigma has left for them: a wooden cat toy, with a fragrant ribbon tied around its neck.

Nevada and Dakota's investigation is interrupted when they're discovered by Ramses, a young scribe-in-training who works in the palace. They convince him that they're visitors and he helps them procure clothes (and make up, as was common at the time), before explaining that they found a toy like one his sister has. He also helps identify the smell as myrrh, a famous fragrance that was popular at the time and plentiful because of an expedition commissioned by Hatshepsut.



Wooden toy cat from Thebes, Egypt, New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.)

Ramses takes Nevada and Dakota down to the local market, where they locate the stall selling toys like the one Enigma left, next to one that sells myrrh. As Ramses and Dakota question the seller as to her trade with Enigma, Nevada spots one of Enigma's evil henchmen and follows him down to the river. There, she spots Enigma and two of her henchmen getting on a boat. She borrows a nearby rowing boat to chase after them—with Dakota and Ramses' help—but they're interrupted by a group of Egyptians looking to water-joust.

Nevada is annoyed that Enigma got away, but Dakota reveals that he found a scrap of papyrus with some hieroglyphics on it back at the market. Upon deciphering it, they realize it's a riddle leading them to

the Temple of Bastet. Ramses leads them there and they discover that a cat's funeral is going on. That's when Nevada and Dakota realize that's what the myrrh is also used as part of the embalming process and the strip of fabric around the cat's neck is linen—the kind used to wrap mummies.

Nevada and Dakota find the cat waiting in the cat's tomb—along with Enigma. She reveals that she's rigged the tomb to explode, before presenting Nevada with an ultimatum: catch her or save her partner. Nevada chooses to rescue Dakota, the cat and Ramses, thus allowing Enigma, who seems upset by this turn of events, escapes once again.

They return the cat to the palace and Nevada and Dakota bid Ramses goodbye, telling him it's time they return home—about which Dakota seems especially sad. Once back in their time, they check in with Washington as they debrief from their mission. Nevada then apologizes to Dakota and explains that the reason she's so determined to catch Enigma is because they used to be best friends once, before Enigma went rogue without telling her why. Dakota accepts her apology and they begin discussing *Their Magical Artifices*, a book series they're both fans of.

In the tag it's revealed that Enigma has been watching them the whole time and she's not happy about it. It's then revealed that she *also* kidnapped Ramses, who is currently lying unconscious in her laboratory...

Theory of Change

PROBLEMS

There is a lack of multicultural history being taught in classes and in textbooks.

There is a lack of diversity on TV.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Elementary and Middle School students.

CONTEXT

Kids watch television on multiple platforms. They also have access to a lot more channels.

Despite the variety of shows, there isn't much diverse representation.

DESIGN PROBLEMS

Lack of multicultural representation in the history being taught.

When multicultural history is taught, it's often tales of victimhood or isolated events. (E.G. Women's Rights.)

The history being taught is usually about Western countries and civilizations.

Lack of protagonists of colour on television.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

The protagonists meet and interact with regular people from historically oppressed groups in each time period they visit so as to showcase their experiences.

Each time period the characters visit will feature background character designs of people from historically oppressed groups.

Set episodes in Asia, Africa, Australia and South America, so as to showcase the histories of countries in those continents.

Both protagonists of the show (Nevada and Dakota) are people of colour.

SHORT TERM GOALS

Describe what different time periods in different countries' histories were like.

Name historical figures who belonged to historically oppressed groups.

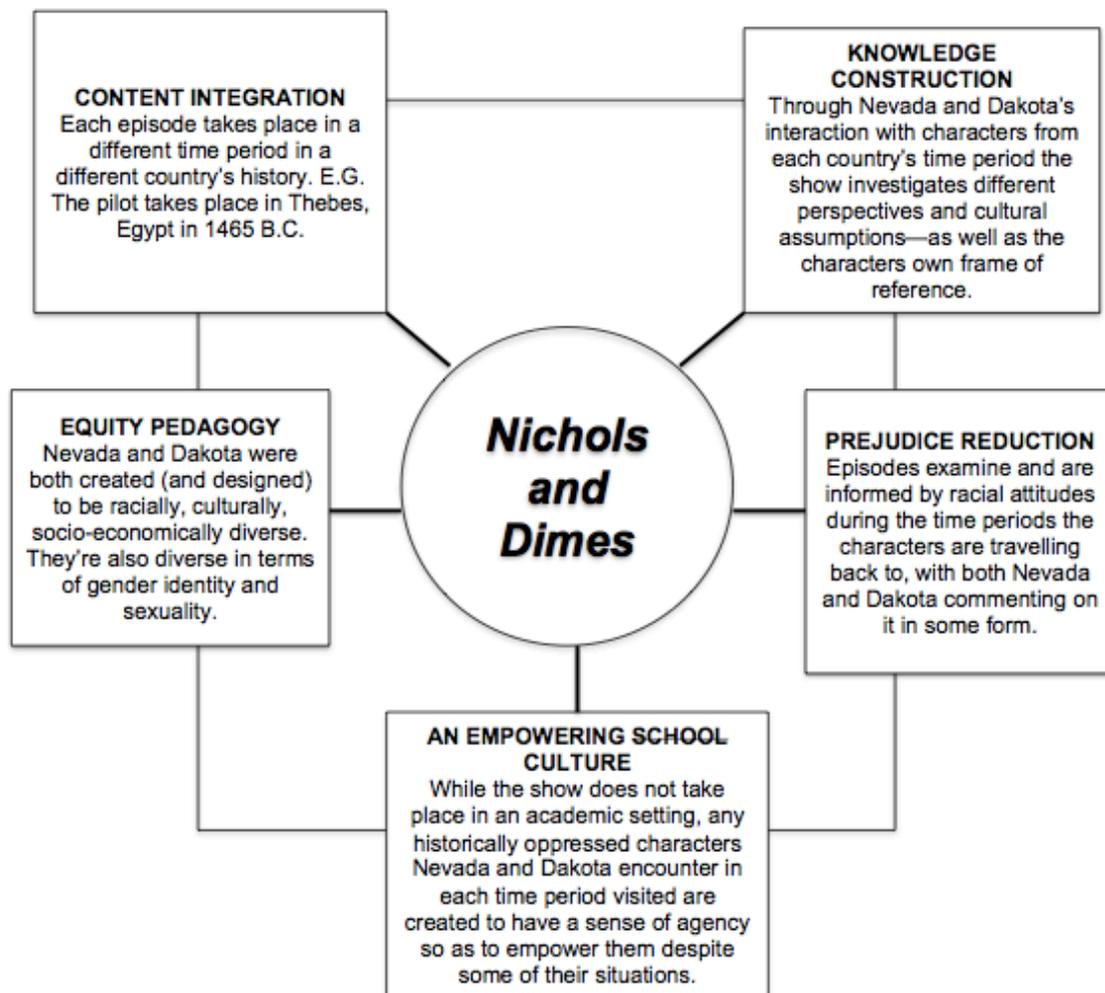
Name various accomplishments in the arts and sciences and who was responsible for them.

LONG TERM GOALS

Show that the events of the past are connected to peoples' experiences now.

Normalize multicultural representation in history.

Learning Theories



Based on Banks' Dimensions of Multicultural Education.